DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 196 813 SP 015 524

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TITLE Title IX and the Minority Women in Sport at Historically Black Institutions.
PUB DATE Jan 80
NOTE 6p.: Paper presented at the National Minority Women in Sport Conference (Washington, DC, January 4, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Attitudes; Athletic Coaches; Athletics; *Black Colleges; *Federal Aid; Financial Support; Higher Education; Intercollegiate Cooperation; Minority Groups; Physical Education; *Sex Bias; *Womens Athletics

ABSTRACT

A discussion is presented of what may be the effect of the law barring sex bias in federally assisted education programs on minority women involved in intercollegiate athletics in minority institutions. New interpretations of federal law are designed to insure that financial assistance will be available equally for males and females in any institution's athletic program. There is a reluctance on the part of many males responsible for athletic programs to share revenue with female athletes, even in historically black institutions. The rationale for this attitude is that male sports programs are assumed to provide revenue for female sports. However, this is seldom the case in black colleges. It is pointed out that unequal facilities appear to be the rule rather than the exception and a critical area of underfunding and understaffing is that of athletic coaches. An examination of these problems offers possible avenues for increasing opportunity and funding for black female athletes in historically black institutions. (JD)

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TITLE IX AND THE MINORITY WOMEN IN SPORT AT HISTORICALLY BLACK INSTITUTIONS

By Dorothy J. Alston

Title IX, an adjunct to the Education Amendments Act of 1972, bars sex bias in federally assisted educational programs and activities. Although there has been some concern for the Regulation in general, the application of that law to intercollegiate athletics has been the most controversial aspect of the statute.

For this session, I am to specifically address the questions, how has Title IX and its accompanying interpretations affected intercollegiate athletics for the minority woman in minority institutions? And, what effect will the new interpretations of the guidelines have on the future of intercollegiate athletics for the minority woman in the minority institution?

Recently, R-E-V-E-N-U-E, revenue, has been the cry of many of the male athletic directors and implementors of athletic programs who attempt to circumvent the intent of the Title IX Regulation. Many of the males responsible for the implementation of athletic programs have taken the position that selected male programs, especially football and basketball, support female programs and therefore, should be treated separately or differently. However, an awareness of the structure and the nature of historically Black institutions leads one to conclude that there are few revenue-producing sports in these institutions. The majority of the money spent for intercollegiate athletics for both male and female programs are derived from student fees. This situation fails to legitimize any revenue-producing sport concerns expressed by this unique populace.

Thus, one might ask what appears to be the problem? The Problem! Especially since many institutions purport to subscribe to not only a legal dictum in providing for equitable opportunities for females in intercollegiate athletics but also to a moral/ethnical one. Additionally, many of the athletic directors and coaches in male programs are members of an ethnic minority group and they, too, have experienced

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discrimination. Thusly, one would assume that they would have a unique sensitivity for the problems or plight of the female.

Historically, Black male athletic programs have suffered from a second class citizenship from which they have in recent years attempted to emerge. Although as previously mentioned, these programs have not been able to produce substantive revenue, athletic administrators have observed their white counterparts engage in the athletic money making process. You see, for male programs, when you talk about money, you are talking almost exclusively about participation in NCAA Division I because of the potential source of revenue one can accrue from bowl participation, media coverage, etc.

Until recently, historically Black institutions did not aspire to compete at this level. However, now, many programs are committed to Division I competition which is more costly than previous program commitments. Therefore, many male programs were engaged in rebuilding programs upon receipt of the Title IX mandate. And when you start a building program with limited funds to begin with, it is more financially difficult to give or to allocate proportionately to another group or a new girl on the block. My remarks here are not an attempt to endorse the concerns of the male athletic directors or athletic administrators, but to present to this audience part of the rationale used to explain the less than enthusiastic financial support for female programs.

What then have been the unique experiences of the historically Black institutions in reference to Title IX? First, in the areas of scholarships, often no systematic approach to the financial awards process has ever been utilized. And in many instances, commitment to equitable opportunity in the scholarship area has been limited to a paper commitment. Additionally, in recent years, females have been offered scholarship awards greater than they had previously received and often

times because of an area that I would pursue in more detail a little bit later, were and are satisfied with this increase without evaluating the equitability of such an increase.

The new interpretations, however, are designed to insure that financial assistance will be available on a substantial proportional basis to the number of male and female participants in any institution's athletic programs. However, many of the male administrators have already started to complain that this requirement will take away from the already limited funds. Thus, the worth of this clarification of the Regulation will depend on how vigorously the Regulations are enforced by individual institutions and HEW. Ethically, we all know that the female athlete is just as entitled to a proportional amount of scholarship monies as is the male athlete in the historically Black institutions.

Now let us take a look at other program areas. In many institutions, improvements have been found in travel and per diem as well as in dining and or training facilities. But one of the most crucial areas still needing attention is that of coaching. The amount of money that an historically Black institution can pay coaches, both male and female in general, is substantially lower than it is in other institutions. Additionally, there is a purported dearth of females trained to coach. Thus, there is a lack of or appears to be a lack of professionals who can provide the quality programs necessary.

However, oftentimes administrators use this purported dearth to hire or employ persons who are less qualified than persons in the availability pool. In recent years, there has been an overutilization of graduate assistants and/or inexperienced and/or inept male coaches who have been rejected as coaches in male programs. In light of this situation, female coaches have to work longer hours with a more difficult task to attain for less pay and with shorter term contracts than male coaches.

While most institutions have been able to expand to provide for locker rooms and other facilities including training facilities to accommodate increased female participation, historically Black institutions have not been financially able to do so. And in many instances, the males have not been willing to share; they still feel that females should be appreciative to have a facility to practice or play in regardless of the time of day. In addition, because of the differences in recruitment procedures, the appearance of male facilities are viewed as being more important than female facilities because they are used as tools of enticement for recruits.

I am sure at this point, the question arises why have the females in the historically Black institutions allowed these things to occur without complaint? Sociologically, there is a double edge sword. The Black female athlete has experienced discrimination as a member of an ethnic minority group as well as discrimination as a female. Since it appears that so little has been done to alleviate the subtle discriminatory practices that have affected these females as a race, it is also assumed that very little is actually going to be done to alleviate or ameliorate problems encountered as a female athlete. In addition, there is also a dual commitment to equal opportunity for both race and sex.

Generally, I do not believe that the problems experienced at the historically Black institution are much different from the problems encountered at predominately white institutions of similar size or even at larger sized institutions. In larger universities you have more dollars to work with, however, you still have the same kinds of problems because women are still getting a minimal share of the available funds.

Finally, how will the new interpretations enhance the opportunities for the Black female? The section on athletic scholarships certainly will ensure an increase in dollar amount for scholarships. However, the equivalency posture for other athletic benefits and opportunities still leave too much to the discretion of the males who

operate most programs. Additional limited progress however, may be found in the area of effective accommodation of student interest and abilities, especially, where levels of competition are to be accounted for, and are to be determined by assessing the interests and abilities of students.

Title IX is the law of the Land. No matter what individual and associations ploys are used to circumvent it, this dictum still represents the National Stance, the great tradition. Therefore, athletic administrators should continue to evaluate programs weaknesses and take appropriate steps to overcome these weaknesses.

For the historically Black institution, one of the best solutions to aid in the amelioration of many of the Title IX related problems is to make a special effort to train or retrain persons to coach, to work with and provide significant services to the athletes. Because you see, the female athlete at the historically Black institutions is going to have to overcome some psychological barriers that will require the expertise of trained professionals. But where we go from here is dependent upon the commitment of Health, Education and Welfare or the Department of Education to the overall implementations of Title IX.